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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4142
INFO RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN 0059
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 5573
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 3637
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 8505
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3514
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 4675
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2794
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0417

UNCLAS NASSAU 000510

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR RCBUDDEN, WHA/PPC MPUC CETTI, G/TIP
KBRESNAHAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [BF](#)
SUBJECT: BAHAMAS REQUEST FOR G/TIP FUNDING

REF: A. STATE 028159

[1](#)B. NASSAU 239

[1](#)1. This is in response to reftel invitation for proposals to combat trafficking in persons. In lieu of separate submission of proposal and summary cable, Post here submits The Government of the Bahamas' proposal for INCLE and/or ESF funds, formatted pursuant to reftel request:

[1](#)A. Bahamas Department of Immigration
Director Vernon Burrows
Contact: Rochelle Smith
PO Box SS-5566
Nassau, The Bahamas
242-502-0542
ronairsmith@yahoo.com

[1](#)B. This project is intended to address needed capacity in The Bahamian government to address potential trafficking issues. It will establish and develop an Anti-Trafficking Unit within the Bahamas Department of Immigration, including setting up the unit, training staff, developing procedures for use by immigration officers in response to trafficking, and the promotion of anti-trafficking legislation. Following the project, The Bahamas will have the structural basis from which to further address potential trafficking issues, as well as the legal and procedural mechanisms to respond to concerns. The project is needed because The Bahamian government does not currently have the capacity to respond to trafficking concerns, lacking a dedicated trafficking unit, a bureaucratic structure within which to address issues, procedures for addressing potential trafficking concerns or legislation making trafficking illegal and protecting trafficking victims. Before The Bahamas can respond to the problem, it must have the structure within which to address it.

[1](#)C. There are no official statistics documenting the trafficking problem in The Bahamas, but the State Department 2006 trafficking report noted large volumes of illegal Haitian migrants vulnerable to trafficking, reports of labor exploitation and the possibility of conditions of involuntary servitude, combined with a lack of legislation protecting potential victims. These issues have continued to develop in [1](#)2007. Despite these developing issues, the Government of The Bahamas does not have a dedicated trafficking unit (though it has established an ad hoc anti-trafficking committee),

established procedures for responding to trafficking concerns or trafficking-specific legislation. Development of infrastructure within Government to respond to concerns is a vital first step.

1D. The project's goal is to create a framework within which The Bahamas can address trafficking concerns. First, the project will set up an anti-trafficking unit within the Department of Immigration, training officers to become anti-trafficking trainers. Second, it will establish procedures for the unit to follow in a trafficking case. Third, it will support the unit's promotion of anti-trafficking legislation in coordination with the Attorney General. This basic framework, legal and bureaucratic, is essential to all three aspects of anti-trafficking, prevention, protection and prosecution and a foundational need for progress against trafficking in The Bahamas. Proposed activities will be as follows: i) Establish anti-trafficking unit of 5-10 immigration officers - July 2007; ii) Train officers to be anti-trafficking trainers - August 2007; iii) Receipt of technical assistance and prepare unit procedures - Fall 2007; iv) Receipt of technical assistance and prepare anti-trafficking legislation - Winter 2007. Effectiveness of the program will be measured by whether the unit is established and trained, whether procedures for the unit are established and whether the unit is successful in work with the Attorney General to pass anti-trafficking legislation.

1E. The Department of Immigration, and the Government of The Bahamas generally, is not experienced in anti-trafficking efforts. However, the Department of Immigration does have extensive experience and capacity in the investigation of human smuggling in The Bahamas, including many officers and a developed infrastructure, with the full support of the Bahamian government. The project will be overseen by the Director of Immigration, Mr. Vernon Burrows. The head of the anti-trafficking unit, and the main project contact, will be Immigration Officer Rochelle Smith. The anti-trafficking unit would also include an additional 4-9 officers to be determined. Potential partner organizations for technical assistance have not been identified, and G/TIP assistance is welcome.

1F. The budget proposal has been broken down into four categories as follows. Additional detail is available upon request.

i) Establishment of the Anti-Trafficking Unit (\$750,000), as follows: Start up supplies and equipment for development of the unit (\$100,000); transportation costs related to unit start-up and temporary travel costs until 2008 Bahamian government funding (\$100,000); temporary funding for officer costs until 2008 Bahamian government funding (\$350,000); temporary funding for victim's assistance until 2008 Bahamian government funding (\$150,000); funding for informants and development of intelligence (\$50,000). Please note that The Bahamian government budget for the next fiscal year has not funded the unit, and these funds will be used to establish the unit pending its inclusion in the usual budgetary cycle.

ii) Training the Anti-Trafficking Unit (\$25,000), as follows: Contracting trainers for five-day train-the-trainer workshop (\$10,000); rental of conference space for workshop, including food (\$6000); materials and equipment for workshop and unit use after workshop (\$4000); travel, hotel and related expenses for off-island attendees (\$5000).

iii) Development of Procedures for the Anti-Trafficking Unit (\$25,000), as follows: Contracting technical assistance in developing procedures (\$10,000); rental of conference space for procedures workshop (\$6000); materials for procedures workshop (\$1000); travel and related expenses for off-island attendees (\$3000).

iv) Promotion of Anti-Trafficking Legislation (\$50,000): Contracting technical assistance in developing legislation (\$25,000); rental of conference space for legislative

workshops (\$15,000); materials and equipment for legislative workshops (\$5000); travel and related expenses for off-island attendees (\$5000).

1G. Resume of proposed Anti-Trafficking Unit chief:

Rochelle Smith
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Nassau, The Bahamas
242-502-0542
ronairsmith@yahoo.com
DOB 10/12/66

Ms. Smith has been employed in the Bahamas Department of Immigration since 1986 and serves as a Grade One Officer. During her tenure, she has worked in nearly every unit of Immigration, and is presently assigned to the refugee unit where she processes and interviews asylum-seekers and manages asylum requests. During her career, she has received training in refugee status determination and interviewing, drug prevention, trafficking in persons (IOM 2004 and 2006) and maritime law enforcement boarding. Ms. Smith attended Evans Barr Memorial Bible College, where she earned her Ministerial license, and Sojourner Douglas College, where she earned her B.A., with Honors, in Administration and Management.

12. There are no known duplicative projects being funded by PRM, INL, USAID and/or the Department of Labor in country addressing trafficking in persons issues.

13. COMMENT: Given lack of TIP experience, The Bahamian government is willing to accept assistance in further developing this proposal. While post strongly supports the general proposal and helped guide Bahamian drafting, due to submission on April 19, Post did not have time for needed work with the GCOB to refine budgetary estimates, and would welcome alternate budgetary suggestions or partial funding of the project. For example, a decision not to fund salary

costs for already-employed immigration officers could easily remove \$350,000 from the request.

14. COMMENT, CONT: While G/TIP funding priorities are for Tier 2 Watchlist and Tier 3 countries, discussion regarding tier placement of The Bahamas this year has indicated G/TIP's concern over trafficking in The Bahamas. This proposal shows The Bahamas openness to addressing concerns and provides an opportunity to help keep The Bahamas from Tier 3 or the Tier 2 Watchlist in future years. END COMMENT.

RAMADAN